TRAVELLER

DEEPNIGHT LEGACY

SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE IN THE FAR FUTURE

TRAVELLER

DEEPNIGHT LEGACY

CREDITS

CLASSIC TRAVELLER
Marc Miller

Loren Wiseman, John Harshman, Frank Chadwick, Darryl Hany, Winston Hamilton, Tony Svajlenka, Scott Renner, Doug Poe, David MacDonald, Wayne Roth, Paul R. Banner.

MONGOOSE TRAVELLER

Author
Martin J. Dougherty

Editor
Matthew Sprange

Layout and Graphic Design
Sandrine Thirache

Cover Illustration
Cassie Gregory

Interior Illustrations
Sandrine Thirache, Cassie Gregory, Anderson Maia, Michael Leonard

TRAVELLER INNER CIRCLE
Andrew James Alan Welty, Colin Dunn, M. J. Dougherty, Rob Eaglestone, Sam Wissa, Joshua Bell, Maksim Smelchak

Special Thanks
Marc Miller, Loren Wiseman

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	02
THE TRAVELLERS	03
REFEREE'S INFORMATION	05
CANDLING STATION	11
DEEPNIGHT LEGACY	19
DEEPNIGHT REVELATION	26
RIFT HAULERS 4A4 AND 5A7	27
ABLE SPACEHAND K.V. MICAALU: FINAL LOG	30
CHARACTERS	31

Traveller ©2020 Mongoose Publishing. All rights reserved. Reproduction of this work by any means without the written permission of the publisher is expressly forbidden. All significant characters, names, places, items, art and text herein are copyrighted by Mongoose Publishing.

This game product contains no Open Game Content. No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without written permission. To learn more about the Open Game License, please go to www.mongoosepublishing.com.

This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United Kingdom and of the United States. This product is a work of fiction. Any similarity to actual people, organisations, places or events is purely coincidental.

Traveller is a trademark of Far Future Enterprises and is used under licence.

Printed in China

MONGOOSE PUBLISHING

T R A V E L L E R

INTRODUCTION

Deepnight Legacy takes place deep in the Great Rift, on a world orbiting a brown dwarf at Point XF-1402. No particular skill set is required to play the adventure, however if the Travellers have sufficient skills to operate a starship this will simplify the start of the adventure. The Travellers begin the adventure aboard a starship but subsequent events take place planetside.

In *Deepnight Legacy*, the Travellers land at a remote outpost to find it deserted. Investigating, they find that the base staff have come into contact with a being similar to the one that infected the research starship *Deepnight Endeavour* (see *Great Rift Adventure 2: Deepnight Endeavour*). Several of the base staff have been turned into servitors of the entity and others have taken measures to escape from it. Whilst searching, the Travellers find a set of carvings on a rock face, in some previously unknown language. It is not, initially, clear if these have anything to do with the disappearance of the base staff.

The Travellers will need to explore the base and its surroundings, finding clues as to why it was abandoned. They may also discover that the carvings were created long ago by a Droyne who had been infected by the entity. They point to a distant location and present a dire warning.

Solving the mystery of XF-1402 earns the Travellers a place on the greatest expedition in human history, the *Deepnight Revelation* mission. This is an epic voyage to the edge of the spiral arm, where the crew will unravel the mysteries of the carvings and hopefully defeat the menace that lurks there.

SETTING UP AND RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Deepnight Legacy begins aboard a ship headed for XF-1402, six parsecs out in the Great Rift, so the Travellers need a reason to be going there. Anyone still serving in the navy or scouts might be ordered to do so – indeed, they may be the crew of a scheduled supply ship. Other reasons can be substituted, however a default backstory is provided on page 3.

Once the Travellers reach XF-1402, events will unfold and the Travellers will have to react to them. There is a general framework to the adventure but no set path to success (or failure) for the Travellers. The adventure does not attempt to programme the Referee with instructions on how to deal with every possible situation or what level of difficulty is appropriate for any given task. This is a matter for the Referee's judgement and is covered in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*. Apart from anything else, a difficulty level appropriate for one group of Travellers might be utterly impossible – or ridiculously easy – for another. The Referee should judge what skill checks are required and at what difficulty, based on the circumstances and the needs of dramatic narrative.

In other words, this adventure dumps the Travellers into a situation and outlines what is happening around them. Subsequent events are at the discretion of the Referee and players.

CHAPTER ONE

THE TRAVELLERS

Rift Hauler 4A4 is a supply ship supporting operations in the Uantil subsector, which has a handful of systems along its coreward edge and is otherwise apparently void. In fact the sector has a few points of interest not shown on most charts; rogue planets, brown dwarfs and charted deep-space asteroids, along with multiple reference points that are nothing but an astrographical convenience. However, one of those reference points actually has a planet, orbiting a brown dwarf not shown on the standard charts.

Those without suitable security clearance see only a reference point with no explanation, which usually means an area of empty space given a reference for the convenience of astrogators. Such points are scattered pseudo-randomly across space, in the rifts and elsewhere. The only data associated with them is a set of standard references to stars with a distinctive signature, fixing the point accurately even if it is just an arbitrary location in deep space. Any location can be pinpointed by using its bearing and distance to three reference points. The same can be done using distinctive stars but the reference point system has the advantage that foreign powers may not know where the reference points are, so an order to move a force to a location defined by them remains incomprehensible, even if intercepted.

A few reference points are not arbitrary locations but real places concealed in the database. One such is Reference Point XF-1402. Officially, it is just another dot on the map but there is a brown dwarf sub-stellar object at this location. It suits the purposes of the navy and scout service not to advertise its presence, nor the fact that there is a borderline-habitable planet there. The brown dwarf is designated B1-DK, its lone planet B1-DK Alpha. The Imperium maintains a small outpost there and vessels like *Rift Hauler 4A4* make the lonely trip across the Great Rift to support it.

This was not to be *Rift Hauler 4A4's* mission. She was scheduled to relocate to the naval base at Giikur for maintenance but was short-stopped. The regular supply ship, *Rift Hauler 5A7,* is six weeks overdue. If she misjumped, or suffered a drive failure in the rift, she might never be found but it is just as likely that she is stuck at B1-DK Alpha with a technical fault. In any case the base personnel need a resupply run and it is not known if they received the last one. They are stuck on a rock six parsecs from the nearest inhabited system with limited supplies and no means to escape if the supply ship does not come.

Rift Hauler 4A4 has been re-tasked. Her mission is to find out what has happened to *Rift Hauler 5A7,* if possible, and resupply the base at DK-B1 Alpha. Her regular crew were not available – they had already transferred to another ship or gone on leave – so a scratch crew was put together. The transit was nerve-wracking, requiring jumps to deep space refuelling caches. There was no sign of *5A7* along the way and no log of a visit at the refuelling points. Now, as *4A4* emerges from jump, the crew hope to discover that their colleagues have been stranded by a technical glitch and the worst they are facing is the beer running out. However this is the Great Rift, any malfunction or error can be fatal.

WHY ARE THE TRAVELLERS ABOARD?

Rift Hauler 4A4 needed a crew – pilot, astrogator, engineers and general shipboard assistants. The authorities were in a hurry and willing to employ or co-opt any qualified people, giving the Travellers a reason to be aboard. Scientists and scouts might be en route to DK-B1 Alpha to begin a stint at the base, while others may have hitched a ride across the Great Rift for their own reasons. They might be trying to

get home after leaving the armed forces in a distant sector, or in a hurry to conduct business. Whether they pulled strings to get a berth or were 'persuaded' to come along to help out, all kinds of Travellers might be aboard the vessel. Some might even be in low berths, awakened just as the ship emerges from jump to help if needed, perhaps even surprised to find their intended trip has taken a sharp left turn.

Ideally, the Travellers will be able to operate the ship themselves but if necessary a non-Traveller crew can be provided by the Referee. It is worth noting that these people are utterly critical to the Travellers' ability to get home unless they can find another pilot, astrogator, or engineer at the station. A mishap befalling one of these crewmembers – or the Traveller filling that role – will endanger everyone. The Referee should keep this in mind if the crew are to be used in the adventure or when a critical crewmember (Traveller or otherwise) is in danger. Threats to the only astrogator who can get them home will increase the stress level of all concerned.

C H A P T E R T W O

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

The following information is for the use of the Referee. How much of it is made available to the players, and in what manner, is for the Referee to decide. Much of this data is commonly known or available through data terminals, information feeds to Travellers' comms and so forth. However, the commonly available version may be incomplete, dumbed-down or wildly inaccurate for all manner of reasons. The Referee has the whole story; if the Travellers want accurate information they may have to search for it or use inventive means.

DK-B1 ALPHA (E542000-0)

DK-B1 Alpha, or just 'Alpha' to those in the know, is a small dry world dimly lit by its brown dwarf primary. Its primitive ecosphere consists mostly of mosses and similar plants, with crawling insects that feed upon it. The air is thin but breathable, however temperatures rise only a little above freezing, even at noon. Alpha had a lot of volcanic activity early in its history but today is more or less inert. The majority of extinct volcanoes are of a shield type, rising gently to a rounded top or collapsed crater that might have a small lake. Climbing these peaks is difficult without assistance and some are tall enough that the air is not able to support humans at the crest. This creates a situation whereby deeper craters are in some cases 'islands' of breathable air.

Travellers arriving on Alpha can function well enough at low altitudes but, for reasons of comfort, the installation and landing field were constructed at the bottom of a deep valley. Acclimatisation is not necessary here but anyone heading up to the surrounding plateau is likely to encounter mild altitude sickness unless they have been breathing a thin atmosphere for at least a few days. The conditions on Alpha are known, so there will have been plenty of opportunity to gradually reduce air pressure aboard the ship. However Travellers who have just woken from low berths will not be acclimatised.

It is always dark or twilight on Alpha. During the day, there is enough light from the brown dwarf to carry out most tasks but lights are needed on vehicles and for precise work. Stars are dimly visible in the daytime and spectacular at night. Although there are none for several parsecs, beyond that the full glory of the heavens is visible. It is also always cold. It is possible to operate outside in shirtsleeves but anyone trying to do so will quickly become chilled unless they are doing something strenuous. The air is generally dry; what precipitation there is falls as tiny snowflakes or a fine mist.

The Referee should keep in mind the conditions on Alpha – dim and cold, making it difficult to see far. The knowledge that there are no other people for several parsecs, and that help is simply not coming, creates an eerie feeling at the best of times; when real danger threatens it is amplified by the sensation of loneliness. Only the most anti-social are unaffected and they tend to have their own psychological problems.

There is a research outpost at Alpha, named Candling Station. It consists of a main installation with a landing field and refuelling facilities, plus a climate monitoring station and observatory in the crater of an extinct volcano close to the valley edge. The small staff of Candling Station are officially there to study the brown dwarf and Alpha itself, which they work on much of the time. Their presence is funded by the navy and scout service in return for supporting trans-rift couriers and naval ships. Indeed, this was the original reason for exploring Alpha. A borderline-habitable stopover in the middle of the Great Rift was a potentially useful asset, especially if its existence was not widely suspected. The advantages of being able to get information across the Rift quickly – especially if others did not know they could do so – was attractive to the Imperial authorities who were quite willing to fund a modest scientific outpost so long as the staff were available to refuel and support the occasional courier.

Whilst Alpha was being surveyed prior to setting up the installation, evidence was discovered of previous habitation. At some point in the past an area of the valley had been scoured of topsoil and the supporting rock levelled off. It was initially assumed this was a measure to facilitate construction but there was no sign of buildings in the area.

Further research found evidence of structures not far outside the flattened area, appearing to have been deliberately levelled when abandoned. Little remained except wall fragments of thin, light material similar in composition to the local rocks. The construction team setting up the outpost on Alpha used a similar material to build their own structures, pulverising local rock to create building materials, but the original builders were

clearly far more advanced. Where the human version is blocky and rather crude, these aliens had created a highly dense silica-based material that could apparently be shaped much like metal.

Before the installation became operational a scientific team was brought in to study these alien traces. They concluded the original habitation dated from the Ancients period and that the scoured area was created with something more powerful and precise than fusion cutters. The positioning of the cleared area cast doubt on the theory that this was a landing area but no other reason presented itself before the research team met with disaster.

The four-person research team was excessively stressed by their isolation and one of their number suffered a serious breakdown triggered by the discovery of carvings on a nearby rock face. These were incomprehensible to the rest of the team but caused a sense of deep foreboding in a researcher named Eleanor Braam. She became obsessed with the carvings, abandoning other duties to stare at them for hours on end.

As a result of being a team member down, along with the air/raft she appropriated, the rest of the researchers had to operate short-handed and inevitably suffered an accident. With their second air/raft out of action, they refused to allow Eleanor to take the functioning one and ended up confining her after she tried to steal it. Eleanor suffered a complete breakdown whilst held and with another team member injured the installation was abandoned when the next supply ship came through.

The incident was logged and Eleanor sent for treatment. She died of unknown causes, although her ramblings were dutifully recorded by hospital staff. The carvings were noted as a curiosity; one of a great many to be investigated someday, before the matter was largely forgotten. The incident sparked rumours of the destruction of a remote outpost but the reality was more prosaic. The tiny cluster of huts occupied by the expedition still stands, stripped of equipment but intact. What happened on Alpha was withdrawal, not destruction. Yet rumours persist, albeit distorted and often transplanted to other locations: ‘They found something and it destroyed them’. In the event, this was a prediction rather than an accurate account of what happened to the first expedition.

Within a few years, a second outpost was set up in a new location further up the valley. Its purpose was, again, to support trans-rift operations although scientific work would also be undertaken. The mysterious carvings were not given any great importance and the new base was located around 80 kilometres from the original site. A larger team was deployed, this time with a naval presence, in the hope that more company and naval discipline might counter the psychological effects of being so far from home.

The new expedition went well enough for the first few years. Occasionally someone visited the carvings and made notes, and work was carried out, on and off, with the intent of deciphering them. Records of Eleanor Braam’s more lucid statements during her treatment were of some assistance but only fragments were translated. Personnel rotated through the installation, data was sent on the supply ships and, eventually, *Rift Hauler 5A7* arrived. A chance encounter with a few fragments of wreckage placed *Rift Hauler 5A7* and Candling Station centre stage in the next act of a drama that had been unfolding since the time of the Ancients.

THE ANCIENTS

The Ancients were immensely powerful and possessed technology beyond the imaginings of most humans, yet they were not gods. They were people and they made mistakes. One such was at Alpha. It began with the discovery of living matter clinging to an asteroid travelling through the Great Rift. Intrigued that living cells could survive in such a harsh environment, albeit in a dormant state, the Ancients studied them. They recognised a threat and set up a small outpost at Alpha, reasoning that it was so remote as to make containment a simple matter. This was a wise precaution; at least one Droyne ship was infected and lost in the Great Rift, found thousands of years later by the research vessel *Deepnight Endeavour*. In the meantime, the Ancients built their installation on Alpha and began studying the alien life they had found.

Once in a warm environment with organic matter to feed on, the few cells the Ancients had found began to multiply. The researchers were fascinated and encouraged the growing mass. They marvelled at its capabilities and continued experimenting until one of their number became infected. This individual was highly psionic and exhibited unusual abilities even as he descended into madness. The process was slowed by the best treatments researchers could devise but ultimately others became infected and the decision was made to sterilise the whole base site. In the meantime the original infectee created a set of carvings on a nearby rock face. Its purpose was to serve both as a warning and a map to the origin point of the entity.

The entire area, for several kilometres around the infestation sit, was sterilised with advanced weapons, creating a super-heated slag of rock that gradually cooled. The surviving researchers boarded their ship and left. All those infected on Alpha were incinerated with

the installation and as a precaution the ship itself was destroyed, with survivors placed in strict quarantine.

This was a good decision; the hull of the researchers' ship had been exposed to a small amount of the entity's matter and might have carried the infection to other worlds. Destruction prevented this, although a few small fragments of the ship survived. They were small enough to be missed by most vessels visiting Alpha, until *Rift Hauler 5A7* chanced to encounter a cluster of debris.

The survivors were eventually found to be clear of infection, at least in the physical sense. Mentally, they were all affected by what they had witnessed and what their telepathic colleague had shown them. The creature they had encountered was the most primitive form of entity that could develop godlike psionic powers. The researchers knew a mature entity existed and they knew where it was. Gathering supporters they set off to find and destroy it, leaving what is now Charted Space shortly before the Final War began. Ultimately, the war caused the collapse of the Ancients' civilisation and their mission was forgotten. The researchers' bold effort took them to what humans call Terminus Point but they were unsuccessful in their bid to destroy the entity there. The last of them perished with their goal in sight but they left behind a warning and signpost on Alpha for those who would follow.

The warning takes the form of carvings created by the first infected researcher, whose telepathic abilities allowed greater understanding of the creature that was slowly taking over his nervous system. The carvings are complex and detailed, although most humans would mistake the swirls and lines for some kind of abstract art. Most gain a vague impression of threat and danger but a small proportion, people like Eleanor Braam, comprehend deeper meaning.

The carvings do not use any known language and do not correspond to symbols found at other Ancients sites, so their origin was not identified by the initial explorers on Alpha. The carvings convey very little information if viewed in the conventional sense. Instead, they are a telepathic trigger, which causes the viewer to imagine what the carver wanted them to. In most cases this process is only partial and results in merely a sense of dread. However, Eleanor Braam had exactly the right neural alignment, combined with latent telepathic ability, to comprehend what the creator of the carvings was trying to convey. This was not a blessing; the carver was, at the time, being consumed from within by an alien entity and was aware of slowly losing himself in the mindless feed-and-grow imperative of the immature being. He gained a memory of sorts, of the origins of the entity and its location, and knew it was still alive and posed a threat to every living thing in the galaxy.

Whilst he retained some shreds of himself the researcher created the carvings in the hope that others would come to understand the nature of the threat and take action. He was thinking of his own people in the nearer future but it was 300,000 years before Eleanor Braam received his warning along with his fragmented memories of his own life and the existence of the Entity. Small wonder it drove her mad.

If viewed by someone not sensitive to the telepathic trigger, the carvings convey only a location, defined by several reference points and a general concept. The location is at the mouth of the Great Rift, right on the edge of the spiral arm, and the concept can be summed up as:

In the Place Beyond Everything lies extinction of all life.

SPORES

The term 'spores' is used to describe cells of the entity capable of infecting people or animals, or growing into a new infestation. They are not spores in the sense of a plant's reproductive system but serve a similar function. Any cell of the creature can act as a spore; in theory a few cells dislodged from a shambler by ineffective gunfire could grow into a new mass if they fell on organic material such as grass or even rich soil. This is not common however; most spores eventually die where they fall. However, any area the creature or its servitors have passed through or had any contact with is potentially contaminated. An infestation might seem to have been cleared only to flare up again later.

THE FALL OF CANDLING STATION

At the time the infection began, Candling Station had a complement of 13 personnel. The naval contingent consisted of a sublieutenant, a petty officer and two technicians, with a scientific and support group consisting of four scientists and their five assistants. For months at a time the scientists conducted observations of the brown dwarf DK-B1 or took samples of vegetation life on Alpha. Occasionally someone visited the distant carvings. They usually came back depressed and baffled, but soon recovered among their comrades. The arrival of a supply ship or trans-rift courier broke the routine for a day or two but overall there was little for the naval contingent to do. It became commonplace for the navy people, even the commanding officer, to assist with scientific work.

Six more people arrived aboard *Rift Hauler 5A7*; the usual crew of pilot, astrogator and four engineers conducting an entirely standard resupply mission. The only out of the ordinary detail was the discovery of what appeared to be a wreck in an eccentric orbit. With no records of any incident this piqued the curiosity of the bored base and ship crews. After a brief EVA to collect a few samples, *Rift Hauler 5A7* landed at Candling Station.

Unloading was given low priority, enabling the crew to take a couple of days to get outside and breathe thin but unrecycled air. There was nothing unusual about this. Some of the crew knew members of the installation staff and new faces are always welcome at a place like Alpha. Work stopped for a party that went on for half a day, although not everyone took part. The installation's chief scientist was busy examining a chunk of what she was now certain to be starship hull the crew had brought aboard and the astrogator of *Rift Hauler 5A7* spent a lot of time wandering around outside instead of socialising.

The astrogator was feeling vaguely out of sorts, but unable to pinpoint exactly what was wrong. She put it down to long weeks in deep space with the same irritating crewmates or the upset caused by finding fragments of a starship in orbit around Alpha. She concluded that was what had disturbed her, she was wrong.

The astrogator was infected but not in the conventional sense. This was something different, something far worse than a bacterial infection. Clinging to the wreckage were a few cells of an alien life form, all that had survived when the Ancients vessel was destroyed over Alpha. The astrogator was unlucky; she cut her finger on a sharp piece of wreckage whilst examining it and the cells – spores, they might be called – entered her bloodstream.

Within hours, the astrogator was running a fever and feeling a general malaise. She began irrationally demanding to take off and head back home – to a much more densely populated world with more life, although that connection was not initially made. Her colleagues realised she was ill and offered treatment; far from hastening take off, her demands resulted in her ship being grounded. With no spare astrogator, the installation staff and ship crew decided to wait until she was well before making the next leg of their trip.

The astrogator did not recover. She remained slightly disorientated and a little irrational but outwardly healthy for three weeks, constantly demanding to be allowed to take off. By this time the base staff had realised there was something on the wreckage but it was too late. One evening the astrogator calmly walked out of sickbay and stabbed three of the base staff with a scalpel. The wounds were minor and not life-threatening but soon the victims were displaying the same symptoms as the astrogator. She was confined to a cabin converted into a cell but the others were able to act before they were detected. Inflicting slight wounds, they infected others and soon half the base staff were affected.

The rest fought or fled as best they could. Paranoia caused a lack of cooperation that might have saved the installation. Within a day most of the staff were dead or hiding, whilst those infected began to change into shambling travesties of people. They broke into the cell and some remained there, tendrils growing from their corpses to form a central mass. With little feed the mass grew slowly, unable to reach the plant life outside to sustain itself. It reached the greatest mass it could grow to and began to die, slowing consuming itself to survive.

Unsure of who was infected or what was going on, the station staff and ship crew took whatever measures seemed most appropriate. Some, including the base commander, broke out the shotguns they had been issued for an emergency and tried to make a stand. Their corpses joined the main mass in due course. The commander of *Rift Hauler 5A7* locked down the ship – saving, but also trapping, the crewmember who had already boarded. He then made off in one of the installation's vehicles, heading for the carvings site.

The naval petty officer, who was the station's ostensible second in command, fought her way clear of the chaos in the installation and managed to rescue one of the scientists. They fled the installation in an air/raft and managed to reach the observatory high on the extinct volcano above the valley. This required flying above the level of breathable air. There had been no time to grab suits or masks and both were suffering from acute altitude sickness by the time they descended into the crater. The air/raft crashed, stranding the pair along with one of the scientists who had been conducting observations there.

Most of the other personnel were quickly infected, although one managed to survive by locking herself in a building. Another, not knowing she was already infected, boarded an ATV and drove recklessly away from the station. She got well clear before the infection began to affect her coordination and was critically injured in the ensuing crash. Her corpse formed the basis of a secondary infection, which is confined within the ATV wreck.

TIMELINE

Candling Station met with disaster approximately 60 days (nine weeks) before the arrival of the Travellers. The arrival of *Rift Hauler 5A7* was 20 days before that. For reference, that means the astrogator was infected around 80 days ago. The progress of the infection and growth of the entity was slowed by the fact it was waking up from a 300,000 year dormant phase and by natural conditions on Alpha. New infections might progress much more quickly, although time required can vary considerably.

THE SURVIVORS

There are currently five survivors of the incident at Candling Station. All are in varying degrees of distress.

Erich Vaalan: The commanding officer and chief engineer of *Rift Hauler 5A7*, Erich is currently at the carvings site, about 80 kilometres from the main installation. He has a functioning air/raft but is in an incoherent mental state due to starvation and the effects of the carvings. As a result he does not answer radio signals and has turned off his positional beacon. Erich is absolutely convinced the entity or its servitors are coming for him and is extremely paranoid. His ragged appearance accurately mimics his mental condition. Erich still has his keycard and access codes for *Rift Hauler 5A7*.

David Mil

Simnon Kiin

Erich Vaalan

Tass Engren

Amelia Zurich

Tass Engren: *Rift Hauler 5A7's* most recent crewmember, Tass is a barely-qualified engineer with an array of generalist skills suiting her to the role of support-and-maintenance technician aboard the ship. She managed to board *5A7* despite being pursued by an infected base scientist and was not infected or exposed. Erich locked the ship down to protect her, intending to return, but was driven away and ended up fleeing in an air/raft. He has largely forgotten about the ship due to his condition, leaving Tass aboard a vessel with only emergency lights and the most basic of life support. She is safe but trapped, unable to determine what is happening outside, and cannot operate the vessel's communications systems. Tass has food and recycled water to last her many more weeks but the mental strain of her ordeal is already making her suicidal.

Petty Officer Second Class Amelia Zurich: Amelia is a recruiting poster image of the earnest young petty officer. She was injured in the crash, and has not properly recovered, but still forces herself to almost superhuman efforts. Amelia is resourceful, smart and determined, but there are limits to even her endurance. She is supported by David, the scientist she rescued. They have become quite devoted to one another although they are almost polar opposites and have a suicide pact in the event the entity's minions find them at the observatory. Amelia has three shells remaining in her shotgun and there are three people at the observatory. She has come to believe this is not coincidental.

Dr David Mil: David is a tall and rather scruffy individual, almost the complete opposite of the much younger, clean-cut and focussed Amelia. Nevertheless, they are a couple and have agreed to survive together or perish together. David is an exobiologist, visiting Alpha for a year to study primitive life in low-energy conditions. He may be able to figure out how to protect against infection or even treat it.

Dr Simnon Kiin: Simnon is the longest-serving member of the installation's science staff. She arrived on a two-year contract 12 years ago and keeps finding new things about the brown dwarf and surrounding Great Rift to study. Although there is a limit to what can be observed from the planetary surface, the data she has to work with is augmented by observations made by passing ships and data packets sent from other observational sites. As a result Simnon is one of the leading experts on deep-space phenomena and the tracking of rogue objects outside a star system. She could get a post at any top-end university but has come to like the long days spent alone atop her mountain with only the stars for company. Simnon is the most likely prospect for figuring out the origins of the wreckage picked up by *5A7* and she already has likely coordinates for the location described in the carvings. She has started referring to it as Terminus Point, although she cannot say exactly why or when she started doing this.

THE INFESTATION

Full details on the entity and its many forms are provided in the *Campaign Sourcebook*. The infestation on Alpha has a primary site in the installation's science building. This can be considered a minor cluster, with the usual abilities such a mass would have. There are also secondary clusters elsewhere in the building, or just outside of it, but these are not independent. Another minor cluster has formed in the wreck of the ATV and if it gains enough sustenance could develop into a separate entity. It is capable of attracting servitors to it if they are left uncontrolled, although the main cluster's influence over them is too strong unless it has been greatly diminished or killed.

The primary cluster in the science building cannot reach additional sources of organic matter to serve as food. Without sustenance the mass will eventually die back, leaving just a few dormant cells. The process might take decades but is inevitable if more organic matter is not obtained. Those infected crewmembers who did not join the central mass have tried to bring more food but it was insufficient. They, too, are dying. The entity and its servitors have gone into a dormant state, awaiting the arrival of more food… food like the Travellers sent to find out what happened to *Rift Hauler 5A7.*

The servitors are shambling corpses of former base and ship crew, now mindless and clumsy. They follow only simple instinctive directives, seeking to infect more mobile creatures or bring organic matter to the central cluster. The entity is trying to keep its remaining servitors mobile for as long as possible in the hope its circumstances change but eventually it will be forced to withdraw them to feed the central mass. If it can somehow obtain more organic matter, it may be able to grow tendrils deep down into the soil around the base in the manner of roots. This will provide scant sustenance but may be enough to sustain the creature for years or even centuries. It will need a greater source of high-value organic tissue to reach a sufficient size that neural pathways begin to form; if it can do so it may even become self-aware. In the meantime, it will leech materials from the soil and rock of Alpha until the world is dead, as well as infecting any crew that lands there.

CHAPTER THREE

CANDLING STATION

Candling Station is the installation on Alpha named, as tradition dictates for minor outposts, after its first commanding officer. The station consists of a landing area – actually a wide expanse of bedrock smoothed out with fusion torches – and a cluster of low buildings. The landing area, such as it is, is separated from the installation proper by a half-frozen stream bridged by a construction of sheet metal and support tubes.

The installation has a central command and power building surrounded by other structures for vehicles, laboratories and living quarters. It is owned and supported by the Imperial Navy, although its staff are mostly civilian scientists and researchers. Complement varies but is usually around 10-14, with about a third of them being naval personnel. The station commander is always a naval officer, usually a sublieutenant on a six-month tour. Scientific personnel tend to be at the station longer than their military counterparts.

The station occasionally hosts shore parties from naval ships on rift patrol. Basic as the installation is, the ability to wander around outside for a while is precious to personnel who have been cooped up in a starship for weeks. More commonly naval and scout service couriers stop over to refuel and deliver small packages as well as news of the outside universe. A station's library of vids, books and games is always extensive but the arrival of something new is a great boost to morale.

THE STATION

Candling Station consists of a landing area and a few buildings. These are not neatly arranged but form a loose cluster on one side of the stream. Structures are permanent and sturdy, built out of moulded blocks created from whatever rock is available and processed through a 'rockcrete' machine, which powders the rock and turns it into a relatively lightweight concrete-like material that is more air than stone. These are slotted onto hollow metal frame tubes at corners and intervals along a wall. The tubes are used to route power, water and electronics conduits as well as providing a frame for the building; doors and windows are mounted on more substantial versions of the tubes. The result is buildings that are solid, long-lasting and rather dreary. Structures are not airtight and do not resist impacts well, although a crumbled section of wall can be easily replaced. Insulative qualities are good, allowing buildings to retain heat efficiently.

All buildings have external lights and there are additional floodlights on posts around the landing field, bridge and buildings. These are positioned to light the camp itself rather than the approaches. On an uninhabited world such as Alpha this makes sense but it does create a feeling of being pinpointed in a bubble of light, unable to see out but clearly visible to anyone or anything peering in. The lights associated with any given building can be controlled from within but there is a master control system in the command centre that coordinates all lighting in and around the base.

It will be immediately obvious as the Travellers approach that the missing *Rift Hauler 5A7* is standing on the landing pad. The vessel's automated systems return a transponder ping, identifying the ship but offering no further information. Neither the ship nor the installation respond to communications, other than with automated beacons. There is nothing to indicate a problem, apart from no signs of life at the station. The lights around the landing field are on, as are some of the lights at the main installation.

THE LANDING FIELD

The landing area is typical for a frontier installation, created by smoothing the bedrock with fusion torches. This creates an unnaturally smooth surface, marred in places by gouges. Any pilot will be familiar with the cause; touching down too hard with forward or sideways momentum. The usual response to creating what is generally termed a divot – but is really just a scratch on the rock surface – is howls of derision from other pilots, although the insult will inevitably be returned at some point in the future. From the number of divots, Candling Station does not see much traffic… or perhaps only unusually gentle pilots land here.

The field has four light clusters at the corners of a square large enough to land several Rift Hauler class vessels. Each cluster has a positional beacon used for precise positioning when necessary. This is unlikely to occur somewhere like Candling Station, but the equipment is standard. A small pumping unit draws water from the stream, which is fed through a

processing unit and into liquid-hydrogen tanks located along the stream-side edge of the landing area. These are buried, with just a small control and monitoring unit above ground associated with each. The tanks are connected by pipes, with one running across the stream to disappear underground in the direction of the building cluster. A standard field reactor could run for years on the contents of the fuel tanks even if the stream ran dry.

A small equipment hut houses a starship support equipment trolley, which includes power feeds from the main reactor and fuel hoses from the tanks. It is neatly stowed, 'navy-fashion', and entirely serviceable. Feeds for fuel and power are connected to *Rift Hauler 5A7* but there is sufficient capacity to connect two more similar ships to the station's feeds if the need arose.

RIFT HAULER 5A7

Rift Hauler 5A7 appears to be intact. It is locked down and does not respond to attempts to open the airlocks. The Travellers have an emergency access code that should be valid for the whole Rift Hauler flotilla associated with Candling Station but it does not work. This means the vessel is either not receiving for some reason – unlikely, since its transponder seems to be working properly – or it has been locked down by the crew. The latter is an emergency measure used where the threat of hostiles outweighs the possibility of assistance. If the lockdown protocol has been activated something serious must have happened after the ship landed. Obviously, this means the crew and the base staff must still be on-planet – unless they left in another ship or were somehow abducted. Neither seems likely.

If the Travellers ever gain access to the ship they will find it intact and entirely useable. The debris brought aboard in orbit was removed to the station for analysis but there is a chance a few cells of the organism remain somewhere aboard. *Rift Hauler 5A7* could be made safe by flooding her interior with ultraviolet light, providing no cells have found their way into lightless crannies. Hard radiation would do it, although this might create secondary hazards for the new crew. Biocides, and even strong cleaning products like bleach, could be used but it would be difficult to say for certain the vessel had been made safe.

The equipment and personal effects of the crew are still aboard and the ship has been refuelled. She has enough provisions aboard to make the voyage to either side of the Great Rift and could be recovered if the Travellers had sufficient personnel to do so. This requires overriding the lockdown protocol; without it, even if they cut their way through the doors, the Travellers would be unable to operate the ship's systems. Even the logs are inaccessible without the correct override procedure. That requires the identity card of a senior crewmember (the captain, senior bridge officer or chief engineer) and a code known to them or a master override issued only to trusted salvage companies and the vessel's owners. The Travellers have such codes for their own ships and will know how difficult it would be to fly *5A7* without authorisation.

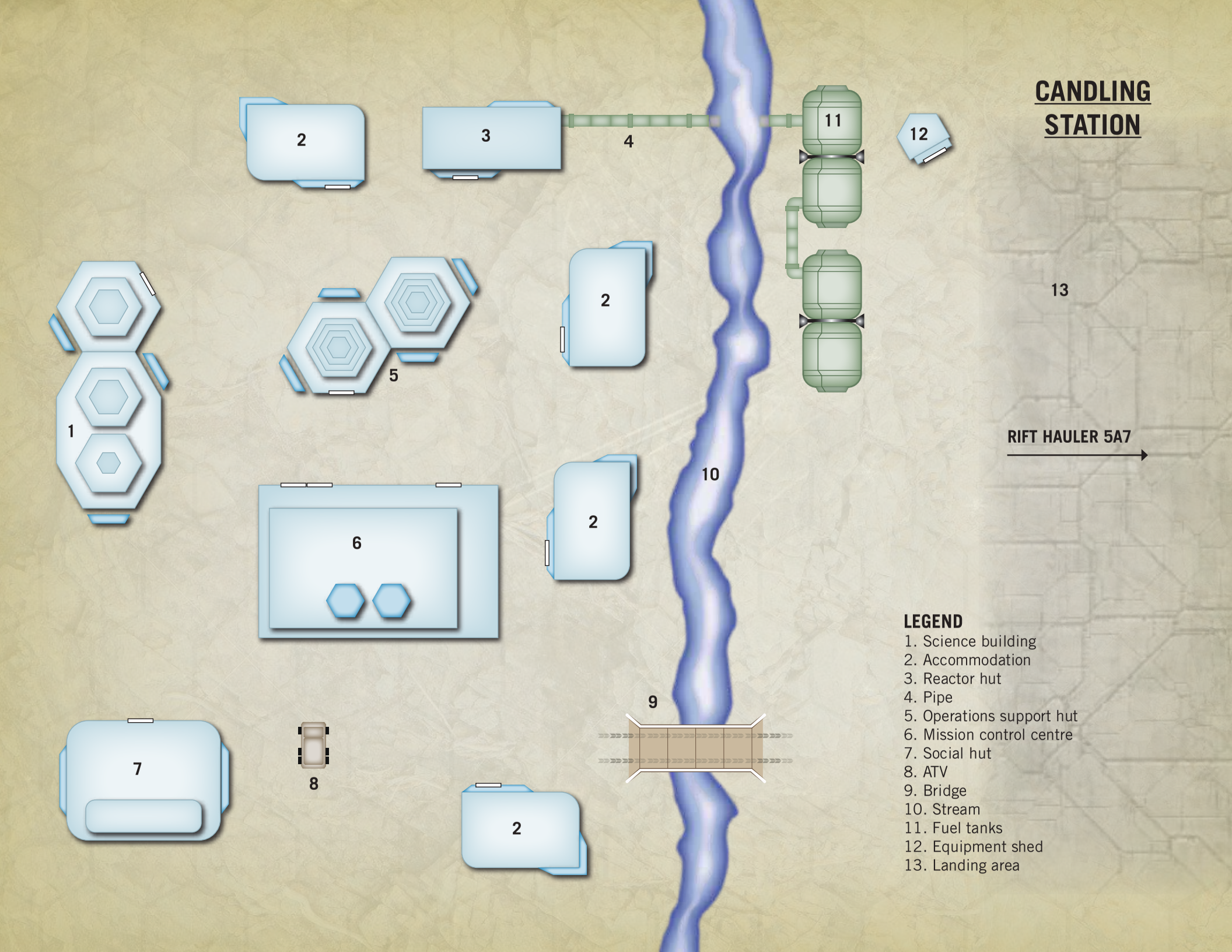
It will not be immediately obvious that someone is trapped inside the ship. Tass Engren has a whole ship to wander around in and no real reason to look out of the bridge vision ports. There are no signs of life detectable from outside the ship unless the Travellers have a neural activity scanner or similar device. If something changes at the base, such as the Travellers turning off the floodlights at the landing field or intensifying them, Tass will notice but even then she has no means of communication. Once she becomes aware of the Travellers she may try to draw their attention, perhaps by setting fire to something and waving it around in front of a vision port. That has the potential to go badly wrong, of course, but there are few other options.

5A7 can be reactivated using the identity card carried by Erich Vaalan and his personal code. Any communications device can verify the two and send an encrypted signal to unlock the ship. If Erich's code is not available there is one other option. The commander of another Rift Hauler – such as *4A4* – can use his own identity card and code along with Erich's card to create an emergency override. So long as the ship can still receive signals this will end the lockdown. It might also be possible to come up with a creative solution such as accessing an external diagnostic panel and hacking the ship's main computer.

Travellers being what they are, they will surely be able to come up with a solution but if not Tass only has one option left. The emergency low berths aboard *5A7* will keep her alive for decades if necessary. She could enter one and await rescue but she is not trained to use them and might not survive the cryogenic process. She would consider this only as a last resort, not least because it means helplessly lying in a low berth with a hostile alien monster on the loose.

THE STREAM

The stream is crossed by a metal bridge wide enough to accommodate an ATV or other large vehicle. It looks a little too lightly built for heavy vehicles but will survive a crossing if made carefully. Lighter vehicles are not a problem and personnel on foot run the risk only of slipping on ice and falling into the stream. This is not a serious problem in most cases, since it is sluggish and only 40 centimetres deep in most areas. However, the water is very cold, with chunks of slowly floating ice.


CANDLING STATION
2
3
4
11
12
13
2
5
1
2
10
RIFT HAULER 5A7
6
2
9
7
8
2
LEGEND
1. Science building
2. Accommodation
3. Reactor hut
4. Pipe
5. Operations support hut
6. Mission control centre
7. Social hut
8. ATV
9. Bridge
10. Stream
11. Fuel tanks
12. Equipment shed
13. Landing area

There is a water quality monitoring system located where the base draws its supply from the stream. This has readouts in the mission centre and at the fuel tanks, and could be reconfigured to check for specific biological contamination if the Travellers wish to do so. This would warn if any of the entity's cells were in the water, reassuring Travellers that the water supply is safe – at least in an upstream direction. The water monitoring system could be used as the basis for a device to detect contamination by the entity. A device built from these components would be very bulky and better suited as a static or vehicle-mounted scanner.

MISSION CONTROL CENTRE

The mission control centre is the largest of the installation's buildings. It takes the form of a two-storey rectangle, with the ground floor given over to equipment storage chambers and a large galley/mess hall. The upper floor contains a communications and control room, computer chamber and two small offices. The roof is festooned with antennae and can be accessed by a ladder and hatch above the main stairwell.

The ground floor has been clumsily ransacked and every accessible piece of organic matter removed. The reason for the pillaging is not immediately apparent, but it will be clear to the Travellers that whilst almost every movable thing on the ground floor has been pushed over and every drawer or container that could be forced open has been, the galley has suffered the worst.

The reason for this is obvious once the Travellers are familiar with the shamblers, the degenerate remains of humans now lurching around as servitors of the being in the science building. They become increasingly clumsy as they degenerate and whilst they initially retain an ability to open boxes and even type in access codes they used to know, the current form of shambler is capable only of dragging or smashing objects.

The whole of the downstairs poses a threat of infection to anyone touching a surface or piece of wreckage, as the servitors have left cells on everything they have touched. The threat is not great but it is elevated here – Travellers with open wounds or who are careless may end up infected and anyone foolish enough to cook their rations in the galley is virtually certain to be exposed.

The upstairs part of the control centre is less damaged and most equipment still functions. The installation logs are not available without authorisation but could be hacked or unlocked by a senior member of the staff. The only surviving people able to do this are all at the observatory. If unlocked, the logs include camera footage from the science building, medical notes from the scientists and a log of events recorded by the naval commander. This is a litany of mundane day-to-day operations until *5A7* lands, and during the first three weeks afterward there are merely concerned notes about the astrogator's mystery illness and the possibility her crew will be stuck on Alpha until the next supply ship comes through.

Analysing the logs in detail will be a lengthy task but will give the Travellers an insight into the infection process. Copies of the medical logs include efforts to treat the astrogator's illness and details of the medicines the installation's scientists came up with. This will help create treatments or preventative vaccine-like medication in the future and will lead to an intriguing conclusion. It seems that the native plant and insect life of Alpha is slightly resistant to the infection process and can be used as the basis for a treatment. The Travellers may eventually come to realise the reason for this – the Ancients who struggled against the same problem created a partial treatment and were able to introduce it into the local ecosphere. Over the past 300,000 years the introduced component has pervaded the whole planet. It may be possible to make use of this attribute or that Travellers already exposed on Alpha may avoid total infection more easily.

Although logs are only accessible with correct authorisation, the base's main controls are in open mode. Sensors, communications equipment and most other systems can be brought back on line from the control room by anyone who can figure out the controls. These are standard, although some of the scientific systems are unusual enough that Travellers unfamiliar with such equipment cannot fathom what they are or what they do.

REACTOR HUT

The reactor hut is a simple rectangular building with a small control room doubling as entry point and stowage areas on each side of it for tools, spares and components. These are well stocked and very orderly, 'navy-fashion' as some might say. The main reactor chamber houses a Ling Standard Products field reactor unit of standard design. A small fuel reserve is housed in a tank buried under the hut, which is in turn fed from the stream. Power lines buried just under the soil surface lead to other huts.

The reactor hut has not been disturbed. Its outer door was routinely kept locked in accordance with naval regulations, requiring direct authorisation from the

control room for those not holding a position requiring access to carry out their work. All naval personnel had access; any naval identity card will open the door – although obtaining one of those might be a problem. Granting access from the main control room is a matter of selecting an option from the main base operations menu – which is not secured. The process simply ensured that all access to the reactor chamber was monitored. This was entirely sufficient on a remote rock like Alpha and had the unintended effect that neither the servitors nor their fleeing victims could get in.

Within the reactor hut the Travellers can find a large quantity of standard electronic and power systems components, all neatly stowed and catalogued. There are no base operations logs in the reactor system, just power usage monitoring charts. These show nothing unusual other than a total lack of changes in the past 60 days. That suggests there has been no human control of the station in that time – normally exterior lights would be switched on and off, heavy machinery would be fired up from time-to-time, or vehicles recharged. The near perfect flatness of the energy usage charts tells a similar story to a flatlined medical monitor.

Note that the reactor cannot be 'set to blow' and turned into a bomb. Fusion reactors do not explode no matter what is done to them. It might be possible to breach the containment bottle and cause an escape of plasma from the power plant; this would be difficult to achieve but would vent plasma over a small area destroying the reactor and creating a plasma cloud 3D metres in diameter. Temperatures within would destroy almost anything but beyond this radius the effect would be greatly reduced. Fires might be started up to 25 metres away but the reactor quite simply cannot be used to destroy the installation.

OPERATIONS SUPPORT HUT

The 'opsup' hut is divided into two main chambers. On the right of the small entrance room is a workshop containing electronic and mechanical repair equipment and a large side door to allow bulkier items to be moved in and out. This is usually left open, which has allowed the workshop to be ransacked by servitors. Inorganic items are strewn about; any observant Traveller will realise that whoever did the damage was either looking for a specific item or something that was not present in the workshop.

The left-hand side of the opsup hut contains the base's main sewage processing system, water recycling and matter-reclamation equipment. Pipes from other huts converge under it, from where useable materials are extracted using the same equipment carried by many starships. Experienced spacers will recognise some of the items in use; those who built the installation bought good quality equipment, which still works.

The processing gear is untouched by the servitors, since the doors to this chamber were routinely kept secured. One reason for that was the ration block production unit; one of the most universally hated items in Charted Space, this equipment can take any organic matter and turn it into blocks suitable for dehydration as field rations or incorporation in regular meals. With a plentiful supply of water, the ration blocks can be turned into a grey gruel-like substance generally known as Glop. Glop will sustain a person's body functions more or less indefinitely but has been described as a critical threat to the long-term mental well-being of anyone forced to rely upon it. Most remote installations have a 'Glop Kitchen' of this sort, stretching out the inventory of rations with the addition of Glop in most meals.

A little Glop will not ruin a meal but if rations are depleted and the staff are relying on Glop for most of their sustenance, morale tends to plummet. On the plus side, almost any organic matter can be used to make Glop, including local plant life. This produces particularly bad-tasting Glop but has an unexpected side effect.

Smart Travellers may eventually come to realise any matter that has been recycled may contain cells from the entity in the science hut and therefore pose a critical threat of infection if anyone has been eating them. Even the water might have a few cells, although the concentration is so low that infection is incredibly unlikely. Nonetheless, the Travellers may have a few scary moments when they realise they have eaten food from the base or made coffee with the water. In fact, they cannot be infected this way. There is a compound in the plant life, soil and water of Alpha that inhibits the entity's growth in a similar manner to an antibiotic. It is not strong enough to resist major concentrations or prevent infection through the bloodstream but a few cells in water or Glop will be killed.

The Travellers may not spot this right away, or at all, but it is an important factor in the adventure. If they do not realise something on Alpha is resisting the entity's biological processes, the Referee may choose to give them information by way of a scientist's logs or one of the surviving base staff. It would be best to let them worry about infection for a while first, however. Letting the Travellers off too easily will reduce the tension of the adventure.

SCIENCE BUILDING

The science building contains a life sciences lab that doubles as a sick bay, a physical science lab set up to receive feeds from the observatory and other remote sensor equipment, and small offices used by the outpost's scientists. Their work is automatically backed up to the main computer in the control centre, which is just as well since the whole building is comprehensively trashed.

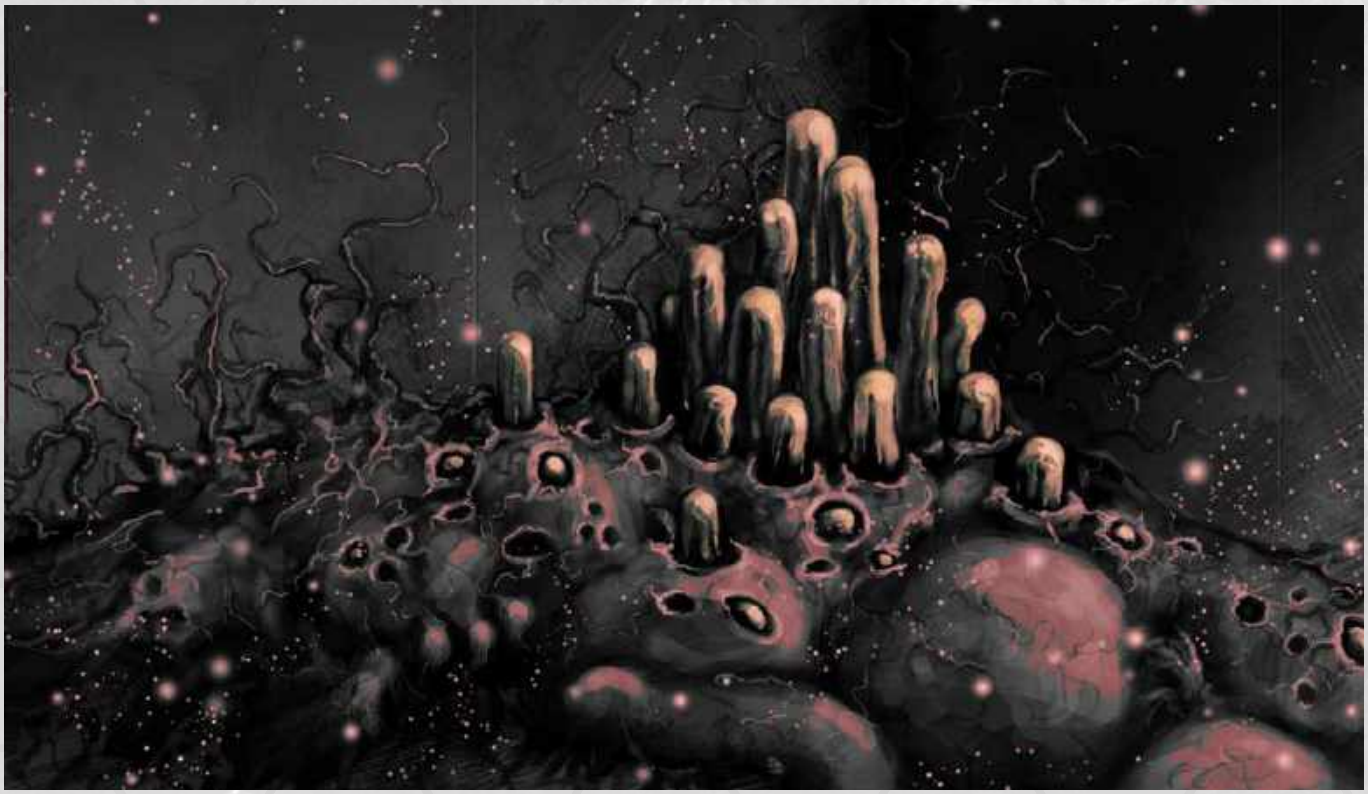
The life sciences lab/sick bay is now overrun by the central cluster of the entity. It does not fill the entire chamber but has several clumps connected by thick tendrils, some of which snake out through the door and a smashed window. Body parts of some of the installation staff, with clothing still visible, can be made out within the clumps. Occasionally the remains of an arm or leg twitches or tendrils stir restlessly.

The remainder of the building has been completely ransacked for everything organic and already been fed to the creature. At the point the Travellers arrive the remaining servitors are dormant, awaiting a change in conditions. Occasionally one is sent to shamble on a reconnaissance of nearby areas; if anything useful were found the others would follow to gather it. The tendrils running out of a rear window of the building have dug into the soil but found little sustenance. A small secondary cluster has formed against the back wall.

The science building is, not surprisingly, the most dangerous in terms of infection. There are spores from the entity everywhere, albeit in small concentrations, and an active threat of infection from creepers and tendrils that may attack the Travellers. Any servitors outside the science hut will be called towards it as soon as the Travellers enter but they may not be attacked immediately. If the creature can detect them – which is certain unless they are wearing sealed vacc suits or similar equipment – it will seek to absorb or infect the Travellers. Although in a very primitive form, the creature is sufficiently cunning as to allow Travellers to get right into the building before trying to trap them with its tendrils or grab them with servitors. It might even let them go if there seems to be a prospect of greater gain. For example, if the creature knows there are more Travellers outside it may allow a couple who have entered to leave unmolested in the hope they will return with others.

SOCIAL HUT

The social hut is, as its name suggests, a recreation centre for the installation. It has a large main room, a small galley/eating area and a secondary chamber that seems to have been used for social vid-watching. The main chamber could be used for many purposes but has a pair of table-tennis tables. Other sporting equipment is strewn around the place, which has been completely ransacked by the servitors.



LIVING QUARTERS

The base living quarters takes the form of four identical huts. Each is rectangular, with a central corridor running through to a common living area across the rear of the building. On each side of the corridor are two starship-style cabins, with a closet for machinery and general stowage between each pair. The four huts give a maximum base capacity of 16 people without double occupancy, although it is apparent that some cabins were occupied by couples.

One of the huts has suffered an internal fire. The fire suppression system appears to have failed and it is apparent that the fire was unusually intense. There are two primary ignition points, which could be construed as having been doused in highly flammable liquid. In fact this is more or less what happened; during the fall of the station some of the personnel made firebombs and lured a servitor into the building before attempting to immolate it. What was left of the servitor was later dragged away by others to serve as food for the main cluster.

Of the other three buildings, one is intact with the door closed. It remains undisturbed, although there are indications that the servitors may have bashed at the door for some time. From this the Travellers may infer that servitors cannot operate a keypad lock and were not smart enough to smash a window and climb in. Both of these inferences are broadly accurate, although a recently infected servitor will retain enough memories and intellect to do these things. Inside the building are the usual personal effects of several people and signs that a single person survived in this structure for some time.

The whole place is almost weirdly neat. The Travellers will find evidence this was the last act of a career naval technician who knew she was not getting out alive. Over several days she put everything in order, recorded a last farewell to her family and a concise report of what she surmised had happened at the base, then donned a clean uniform and blew her brains out in the shower cubicle of her cabin. An empty security shotgun is neatly stowed in her quarters and her sidearm has no ammunition left.

Her final log can be read on page 30.

The two other living-quarters buildings have been ransacked. In one case the door is open but undamaged; in the other it seems to have been smashed off its hinges. Nothing organic remains either building but everything else has been discarded wherever it fell. Note that as soon as the Travellers open the door to the intact hut they will attract shamblers who will attempt to ransack it and carry off the body of the naval technician to feed the central mass.

THE FUNCTIONAL ATV

The remaining ATV is functional and intact. It is still connected to the base's power feeds but other than disconnecting the cables nothing need be done to make it drivable. Using the vehicle requires an authorisation card, or the identity card of any base staff member, but there is already a card in the slot – there was simply no reason to secure the vehicles against theft on Alpha. The vehicle is fully provisioned and has all the expected tools and equipment.

THE ATV WRECK

The wrecked ATV is on its side in a gulley some 15 kilometres from the station. Its communication systems are offline and the power plant is shut down, however the vehicle's erratic progress is not hard to track once its initial direction is known. There is no reason for the path the vehicle took; the driver was trying to escape and fleeing blindly, before rapidly succumbing to an infection that caused severe disorientation. She did not have any particular destination in mind.

There is now a cluster of the entity's tissue in the cab of the vehicle. It has consumed the driver and all organic material it can extend a tendril into, including ration packs and seat covers. Having exhausted available resources and unable to escape the vehicle, the cluster has become dormant. It will awaken as soon as the vehicle is opened, although it will be very slow to react at first. Travellers will see tendrils twitch and jerk, then slowly start to creep in their direction. If permitted to do so, the cluster will drive what amounts to roots down into the surrounding soil and begin to grow. This will be an extremely slow process given the poor nutrition available but ultimately a major cluster will develop. This might go entirely undetected until some hapless explorer stumbles upon an unusual fungus-like growth and takes a sample.

KAIIVU OBSERVATORY

The observatory is a mostly automated installation in the crater of an extinct volcano, Mount Kaiivu, which lies close to the valley side. This is one of the taller mountains on Alpha, with a deep crater. The lip is above the vertical limit for humans, even those acclimatised to Alpha's thin atmosphere, and the crater

is uncomfortable without assistance. It is possible to function there without a compressor mask but altitude sickness or at least headaches and tiredness are likely. Few of the base staff like to visit the observatory as it requires use of a compressor mask and careful maintenance of a comfortable atmospheric pressure in the small buildings, although Dr Simnon Kiin spends much of her time there and enjoys the solitude.

The observatory consists of three buildings; an accommodation hut, a utility shed and a much larger observatory building. There is just enough flattened space between them to land an air/raft; a starship could not fit between the buildings and the rest of the crater is far too uneven to offer a safe landing area. Boulders and clumps of solidified lava make it impossible to land without damaging a ship, possibly seriously.

The accommodation hut is more or less identical to those at the main installation, although one of the cabins has been converted into a power cell and life support equipment chamber. The hut was intended for use on a temporary basis but Dr Kiin has taken up residence there more or less permanently. Her personal effects are, for the most part, at the observatory rather than the main base. This might make the Travellers suspicious but it is simply due to the fact that she lives up on the mountain for more than 90% of the time.

The equipment shed is an unpressurised light building containing a few pieces of geological sampling kit and assorted hand tools. Little use has been made of these items and in some cases they are still in their factory packaging.

The observatory is pressurised, with air piped in from the accommodation hut. It is quite large, with optical and radio telescopes on the roof. Additional instruments are located on the crater lip, along with an antenna for the communications system. This is non-functional, having been clipped by the air/raft that subsequently crashed in a boulder field short of the observatory. It might be possible to jury rig the instrument clusters to act as radio relays but none of the people at the observatory have the requisite electronics skills.

CANDLING WEATHER CENTRE

The weather centre is a rather grandly named hut about 3 kilometres upstream of the main installation. It is located by the stream, with probes in the water and all manner of instrumentation mounted on its walls and roof. The equipment is semi-automated with data streamed back to base in real time. It is used by personnel only when there are adjustments to be made or equipment needs to be modified.

The weather centre has not been disturbed since the fall of Candling Station and remains in functional condition. Its equipment could be used to create contamination detectors keyed to the composition of the entity's cells and might even be used as part of a makeshift medical laboratory attempting to synthesise a treatment for infection.

THE CARVINGS CAMP

The 'carvings camp' is the original base set up at the site of the mysterious carvings about 80 kilometres from Candling Station and has no official name. It was stripped when the first expedition was withdrawn, leaving only the shells of buildings, but made liveable again – in a very basic way – by the new arrivals. The camp has been used intermittently by researchers visiting the carvings. A wide variety of tools and equipment have been left behind, including items thought to be lost by their owners. The carvings are sufficiently disturbing that most visitors are in a hurry to leave and may be confused or forgetful when they do. By the time a visitor returns to a more normal mental state their memories of the visit to the carvings are usually vague. As a result even normally diligent personnel have a tendency to suffer accidents or lose items due to lapses they cannot readily explain.

C H A P T E R F O U R

DEEPNIGHT LEGACY

Deepnight Legacy does not have a predetermined script. The Travellers arrive on Alpha, things start to happen and a story will emerge as the result of their actions. Whether or not it is a tragedy depends on the decisions made by the Travellers.

The adventure revolves around the Travellers' attempt to figure out what has happened on Alpha and escape with or without the survivors. 'Winning' in *Deepnight Legacy* can be measured in terms of getting off the planet without being infected by the entity or surviving infection. In an ideal world, the Travellers will discover both infestations and destroy them, then rescue all survivors of the attack and maybe even recover *Rift Hauler 5A7*. Given how little they know about the situation when they arrive, the Travellers will be very lucky to pull all that off.

THE ENTITY

The entity infesting Candling Station will feature prominently in the *Deepnight Revelation* campaign. Travellers encountering other manifestations of the entity may be surprised to find they have characteristics different to the one encountered on Alpha or aboard the research ship *Deepnight Endeavour,* although its general characteristics will be the same. The entity in the science building is a minor cluster (see page 14 of the *Campaign Guide*).

The situation as the Travellers arrive is that there is a cluster in the science building of the installation, which has a few servitors in the form of shambling corpses animated through infection by the entity. A secondary cluster exists but is trapped in the crashed ATV. This is also a minor cluster but a small one that has not fully developed.

The entity is not malicious, in the same way the ocean has no malice towards the trawlerman who falls overboard. It does, however, have imperatives to survive, feed and grow, and its needs are well served by infecting mobile creatures such as Travellers and their crewmates. It is not smart but can choose to pass up an opportunity in the hope of greater payoff later. The entity cannot be bribed or appeased but will ignore anything it does not need to deal with at the present time. Thus it may be possible to get quite close without being attacked, especially if the entity is not yet desperate for sustenance.

The entity senses living creatures and plant life primarily through pheromones and cells drifting on the air. The normal shedding of skin cells is sufficient to lead a servitor to a hiding Traveller but someone wearing a sealed vacc suit would be all but invisible to the creature. It can sense heat but associates a narrow range of temperatures with biological processes. It will probably ignore a hot suit vent but a heat source of body temperature might be used to distract it. It is not yet well developed enough to learn and will fall for the same trick over and over. However, a recently infected servitor might not.

Servitors have the senses of whatever person or creature they were before infection and even as they become shambling travesties of their former selves they retain the ability to recognise shapes. A tendril of the entity's central mass will not be attracted to a Traveller wearing a vacc suit but a servitor will recognise the shape of a living creature and once it does, the central mass will react with its tendrils as well.

If the entity is simply left on Alpha it will eventually die. In most locations this would not happen; even thin soil with minimal life would be enough to sustain the entity and allow it to grow, and in a sterile environment it would die back to a few cells and become dormant for millennia. Alpha's ecosystem has an agent introduced in the time of the Ancients which will attack the entity. It is too weak to affect a large mass or an infected servitor but will kill off a small group of cells… eventually. However, this process could take decades, or even centuries, during which time anyone blundering into the deserted outpost risks infection. A ship that rushes a sick crewmember to the nearest inhabited planet could bring down disaster on a whole region of space.

The infestation could be removed by the application of sufficiently high temperatures over the whole area. Conventional explosives might kill the creature but are more likely to spread its cells around, creating multiple areas of secondary infestation. These will probably be killed by the planet's ecosystem but will

remain hazardous for months or years. A nuclear device would suffice to eradicate the infestation – along with everything else in a wide radius – if the Travellers had access to one. This will be the Imperial Navy's preferred solution to the problem if the Travellers inform the authorities of the threat.

A bracket pattern of nuclear missiles around the installation, and one into the ATV wreck for good measure, will deal with the problem in much the same manner as the Ancients did. However, the navy may not be permitted to do this. A threat of this nature requires study, especially if there is evidence of a counteragent. If the Travellers leave the eradication of the infestation to others or to the local ecosystem, there is no guarantee it will not find a way off Alpha sooner or later.

As noted elsewhere, the fusion reactors of the two ships and the base itself cannot be turned into bombs, although they will flood an area with plasma hot enough to kill the creature. Getting a fusion reactor close enough to the science building would be an interesting engineering exercise but perhaps it could be done.

If the Travellers are wedded to the incendiary solution, there is a ready answer in the liquid hydrogen tanks at the base. Combined with oxygen in the right proportions, the hydrogen could be ignited and would probably destroy the creature. There are, however, problems with this plan. The correct mix would be difficult to achieve and Alpha's thin atmosphere will not support combustion well. A suitable device would require tanks for hydrogen placed around the building or a short distance away, with an oxygenating compound available to combine with the hydrogen when released. A large enough bracket pattern of detonations would flatten the building and burn away all traces of the creature. Again, this is not a simple matter but it could be done.

Fire of a lower intensity could be used. It might be possible to create a flamethrower, although fuel would have to be produced somehow. Sustained hosing with a flamethrower would burn away the creature and kill its cells. The use of cryogenic fluids (such as liquid hydrogen) would render the creature's tissues inert but not kill it. Of course, dousing it in liquid hydrogen and allowing the gas to evaporate into the presence of an oxygenating agent… that would create a suitably hot explosion and a satisfying amount of destruction into the bargain.

Poison is also an option. If the Travellers can isolate the agent present into the local ecosphere and produce enough of it, they may be able to simply poison the entity. This would require the creation of a physical science lab to first conduct biological experimentation, then synthesise the agent as a chemical. Sufficient equipment to do this can be found at the weather station or cobbled together from parts of the two ships.

PROGRESS OF THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins when the Travellers touch down on Alpha. The Referee should keep in mind the local conditions. It is cold and dark, and the thin air produces an eerily light wind. Sound does not travel well for the same reason.

The Travellers will be able to see there lights in the main installation and that *Rift Hauler 5A7* is on the landing pad. They may investigate the ship first but it will not be apparent that there is anyone inside. Tass will be asleep or in a different part of the vessel, away from the viewports, and will not be aware of the Travellers – or them of her – at first.

Once they do notice Tass, the Travellers will be unable to communicate with her to any great extent – she did not have her personal comm with her when she fled and the ship's are non-functional. Gestures are the only option and may not convey much information. Ideally, the Travellers will become aware of Tass after an initial visit to the main installation. They might see a figure frantically waving a lightstick or fire in the viewports of *5A7* and will then have to figure out how to get her out of the ship.

The Referee should make much of the isolation and silence surrounding the installation. The slow glug of half-frozen water under the icy bridge and hum of water processing gear are the only sounds as the Travellers approach. Someone might think they spot movement but there is no noise, no change in the lights, no indication of life at the installation. The shamblers are dormant at this point and the Travellers will be able to enter at least a couple of buildings before they wake up.

The Travellers run the risk of infection whilst they are at the installation but, unless they go into the science building or come into direct contact with a shamble, the risk is small. However, as they learn more about the entity the Travellers will realise it is only a matter of time before everyone is infected, unless they find a preventative measure or destroy the creature.

The science building is in darkness, so it may not be initially apparent that anything is wrong there. If the Travellers reach the doorway they will see a mass of what seem like fungal growths and tendrils across the walls and ceiling. They start to move restlessly when the Travellers come close but will not be fully active for some minutes. The sight of the creepers starting to move is disturbing but the Travellers might not appreciate just yet how much danger they are in. The initial exploration of the installation should be a time of threat and tension, with half-seen movement turning out to be a trick of the poor light… until it is not.

An encounter with a shambler is likely at this point. Exactly how many remain active is up to the Referee. There were 19 people in total at the installation. Five survivors and one in the ATV wreck leaves a total of 13 infected people, some of whom were absorbed by the creature. The shamblers should be used as an insidious threat rather than flung en masse at the Travellers. Indeed, one is enough at this point, since the shamblers are quite difficult to kill. The Referee should establish a serious threat rather than overwhelm the Travellers and once they realise they cannot easily deal with just one, they should be presented with the frightening spectacle of others lurching out of the shadows or what seems to be a pile of fungal matter staggering to its feet.

It is possible to stay ahead of the shamblers, especially at first when they are extremely sluggish. Sooner or later someone will get cornered, however, so the Travellers should realise the base is untenable unless they barricade themselves inside somewhere.

During this initial investigation the Travellers will learn certain facts that will drive their actions for the rest of the adventure.

- There is something very unpleasant in the science building.
- There are lurching travesties of humans, apparently some kind of fungus-zombies, in the base and they are difficult to kill.
- There is someone trapped in *Rift Hauler 5A7* and the ship is in lockdown. As crew of a similar vessel the Travellers will recognise the situation and realise they need the captain's identity card to reverse it.
- There are signs that there were two air/rafts and two ATVs at the base. Only one ATV remains.
- The Travellers are aware of the general layout of the base, including the carvings camp, observatory and weather station.

Once the situation has been established, the Travellers must find a way to resolve it. An obvious progression would be to take the ATV to the carvings camp (or fly there in their own ship) and locate Erich. His ID card is needed to free Tass. The air/raft at the carvings camp can be used to reach the observatory and rescue the survivors there. However, just getting everyone together is only a partial solution. The Travellers will need to ensure that nobody is infected and, ideally, destroy the entity at the base. They may also find out about the second ATV and deal with the cluster there.

How the Travellers go about solving these problems is entirely up to them. The adventure presents the situation and the resources available; beyond this the Travellers are captains of their own fate. They could refuel their ship and escape, leaving the survivors to their fate, although that would raise questions upon their return home. A more satisfactory solution would be to learn more about the entity and perhaps attempt to destroy it. To that end the Travellers may need to improvise some equipment.

CREATING EQUIPMENT

The following guidelines can be used by the Referee to determine the time required and necessary materials. Most tasks require a skill check or task chain to figure out what to do and create a solution.

Detecting Contamination

A handheld device capable of analysing samples of tissue or organic matter by checking for specific protein interactions could be created from sampling equipment at the weather station or the fuel and water extraction point by the stream. Analysis is performed with a probe attached to the unit and takes a few seconds. The unit cannot perform remote scanning for infection but a room or small building could be determined to be clear by swabbing a large area and testing the sample.

Building a unit of this type requires an Average (8+) Science (biology) check and using it requires an Average (8+) Electronics (sensors) check. Construction will take 2Dx15 minutes.

The water sampling units at the weather or fuel stations could also be used as makeshift detectors. A sample can be created by swabbing the area to be tested and rinsing out the swab into a container of water. The monitoring system will show the presence of an unknown

biological contaminant if the entity's cells are present, although there are other compounds that will cause a false positive. Someone with Science (biology) 2+ or Electronics (sensors) 2+ could refine the parameters to reduce the possibility of false positive readings.

Detecting Infection

Detecting infection in a person or animal is more time consuming but simpler than finding contamination outside a living host, since equipment can be set to look for symptoms rather than protein interactions, which may only be present in some areas of the body. A quick-and-dirty infection test can be carried out using a finger-prick blood sampler set to look for indicative symptoms. Anyone with Medic 1+ can configure a standard handheld diagnostic sensor to do this providing they know enough about the progress of infection. This data is available in the base logs, courtesy of the deceased medical officer.

A quick test takes 2Dx5 seconds to produce a result. However, even when working with good data from the base logs, the test produces a false negative about 33% of the time (roll 5+ on 1D). This false negative rate might eventually be reduced with enough study but the limitations of the method will never be fully overcome. Note that retesting will still produce a false negative if one has been recorded recently. After 1Dx30 minutes the test again becomes valid and a new roll for a false negative is made when the test is repeated.

A medical facility such as a properly equipped starship's sick bay can check for infection more reliably. A blood sample and general scan will take around 10 minutes to produce an accurate result providing a competent Traveller runs the process. An Average (8+) Medic check will allow the test to be set up for each patient. Infected persons will be reluctant to take the check, often without realising why, finding urgent things to do or otherwise trying to avoid being tested, and someone whose infection has progressed might even try to wreck the equipment.

Infection

Full details on the stages of infection and degeneration into a shambler are presented in the *Campaign Sourcebook*. The notes here are specific to this adventure and the unique conditions on Alpha.

A person can become infected by the entity through contact with a few spores – in other words any contact, even with items contaminated with cells from the creature, can result in infection. Skin contact poses the least threat, inhalation somewhat more, but the most serious danger is from ingestion or entry into the bloodstream by way of a wound. The astrogator of *Rift Hauler 5A7* was able to rapidly infect others by cutting herself with a scalpel and stabbing her victims, thereby introducing her own infected blood into the target.

On Alpha, inhalation is very unlikely as airborne spores will probably not be encountered. Routine precautions such as a simple cloth over the face to prevent inhalation will greatly reduce the chance of infection. Similarly, 'barrier' protection such as gloves and covering skin with clothing will reduce the chance of contact infection, whilst using a sealed suit will eliminate it entirely. However, spores might be carried on the outside of a suit and contaminate the wearer as they remove it. Rinsing with water or some other liquid is an adequate decontamination method but since all water in the base is recycled, doing so in an accommodation block shower might not be as clever as it seems. The concentration of cells in the water system would have to be quite high to pose a real threat of infection but it is always possible someone will be unlucky.

A Traveller who has been infected will show no signs at first but will develop a fever and become prone to irritability within 1D hours. They will gradually become aware of a mental 'pull', which makes some actions seem more attractive than others. At this point, the Traveller is still fully in control of themselves but aware of wanting to take certain actions. If they think about it, they will soon realise these actions benefit the creature. It is not sophisticated enough to conceal its intentions since it is operating on an instinctive level, so a Traveller might find they want to go to the science building but cannot say why or may feel a strong but controllable urge to smash medical equipment that could be used to treat their infection.

Once someone is exposed they will normally progress through several stages of infection, in a more or less predictable manner. However, conditions on Alpha will inhibit the progress of the infection most of the time but can occasionally result in a more rapid degeneration to shambler state. The Referee can use this to horrify Travellers as someone degenerates rapidly in front of them but it should not be done to the Travellers themselves – they should have a chance to find a cure or at least make an ending of their own choice.

The normal check to avoid or resist infection should be made but DM+2 applies to all checks made whilst within the ecosphere of Alpha. Similarly, the time

between checks is 1D+8 hours rather than the usual 2D hours. Progress for a Traveller will be through Exposed, Infected, Controlled and Shambler states (see the *Campaign Sourcebook* for details).

INFECTION CHECKS

Any time a Traveller is exposed to spores from the creature, a check to avoid infection must be made. This is an Easy (4+) END check. If the Traveller is wounded by a spore-bearing object such as a tendril or a weapon that has been used to cut one, DM-1 applies to the check per point of damage the Traveller suffers.

Treatment

Treatment of the infection is normally possible at the Exposed and Infected stages but on Alpha it is sometimes possible to reverse the degeneration of the nervous system and kill alien cells even at the Controlled stage. Of course, subjects will not cooperate with any procedure. Rules for treating the infection under most conditions are found in the *Campaign Sourcebook* but within the ecosphere of Alpha there is a real chance a Traveller's body could fight off the infection with help.

If the Travellers have succeeded in synthesising a counter-agent, administering a dose will halt the progress of the infection for 3D hours. At the end of that time the Traveller may make a Difficult (10+) END check and if this is successful the infection retreats one stage; Infected becomes Exposed and an Exposed Traveller is now free from infection. The counter-agent only works this well on Alpha, or rather within an ecosphere that has had 300,000 years and been introduced to Ancients technology to build up resistance to the entity's infection.

Synthesising a counteragent is not an easy task, requiring access to a laboratory capable of undertaking complex biological and biochemical tasks. The only one on Alpha is currently inhabited by the central cluster of the creature. The Travellers might be able to put together a makeshift lab using parts from the two ships (meaning they will have to get access to *5A7* somehow) and the weather station.

With this equipment the Travellers can begin work. It requires at least Science (biology) 2+ or Medic 2+ to run the lab – one level of each is acceptable. Every 2D hours of work in the lab allows the scientist to make an Average (8+) Science (biology) check. One success indicates progress has been made but no agent is ready yet. A second success results in the creation of a suitable counteragent.

If the Travellers continue work, a third success, this time with a Difficult (10+) check, allows the creation of a concentrated agent that will harm the entity.

Once these compounds are available, they must be produced. A batch takes 2Dx30 minutes to create and must be overseen by a laboratory-qualified person (any Traveller with level 1 or more in a Science skill can produce the counteragent). The amount produced is equal to the Effect of an Average (8+) Science (any) check. If the Effect is negative, the batch is spoiled and on Effect of –6 the Traveller will not notice, perhaps resulting in a toxic or at least ineffective agent.

Using the concentrated counteragent on an infected person produces the same results as the standard version but also inflicts 3D damage, ignoring armour.

Counteragent

Time	Check Difficulty	Result
2D Hours	Average (8+)	Promising progress
2D Hours	Average (8+)	Counteragent created, one dose available
2D Hours	Difficult (10+)	Concentrated counteragent created, one dose available
2Dx30 minutes	Average (8+)	Number of batches equal to Effect are produced

DIRECT COMBAT

The Travellers are likely to find themselves directly opposed to three elements of the entity. Creepers, shamblers and the clusters at the ATV wreck and science building are the only manifestations present on Alpha.

Creepers can take the form of tendrils attached to a mass or detached segment that writhes its way along the ground. They are used to grab or bash at Travellers or wriggle up to someone and try to infect them. Detached creepers – and how to deal with them – are described on page 18 of the *Campaign Guide*. They are an insidious threat and can theoretically writhe long distances to create a new cluster. However, since the environment of Alpha is slightly toxic to them, detached creepers will slowly degenerate if they are not reconnected to

the central cluster. It is thus unlikely that a secondary infestation will take hold unless there is a large source of nutrition not tainted by the agent found in Alpha's ecosystem. A newly arrived Traveller would be ideal for this purpose.

Eliminating the central mass is a challenge. A secondary cluster such as that at the ATV wreck has 30 Hits and regenerates them at the rate of 1D per hour. The main cluster in the science lab has 100 Hits and regenerates at 3D per hour. As noted in the *Campaign Sourcebook*, projectile and bladed weapons are largely ineffective against a cluster (and also tendrils and shamblers) but fire or energy weapons will be effective.

Destroying the clusters on Alpha could be performed in various ways. Strong ultraviolet light will kill individual cells and harm the outer surfaces of a mass, inflicting one point of damage per day. This cannot be regenerated whilst the ultraviolet source is directed at the creature. Some forms of radiation might have a similar or greater effect, although generating them would be difficult. Heat is the most likely method of quick destruction.

If a concentrated counteragent is introduced to the cluster it will inflict 2D damage per hour for 1D hours and inhibit regeneration during this time. Further doses can be delivered after the first has run its course. Introducing the agent might require creativity; organic matter might be 'poisoned' and left for servitors to find, or multiple darts could be shot deep into the creature. A Traveller infected by the creature and with no hope of salvation could inject themselves with the agent and jump into the central mass… in short, the counteragent will kill the creature but introducing it is a problem for the Travellers to solve.

Shamblers are described on page 16 of the *Campaign Guide*. They have the same resistance to weapons as clusters and tendrils, although controlled people do not. The Referee should remember that blasting a shambler apart does not necessarily prevent it from reforming or becoming a small cluster with tendrils. The scene of a previous fight might become impassable as a result. Controlled people who have not yet become shamblers might go down to conventional weapons and get up again a while later as shamblers – which cannot be stopped by the same weapons. Shambler fragments also pose a threat of infection, so it may be that pinning one somewhere it cannot get out of might be a more effective solution than trying to kill it.

SHAMBLERS

ANIMAL	HITS	SPEED
Shambler	25	3m
SKILLS	Melee (Bludgeon) 1	
ATTACKS	Club (2D) or Arms (1D)	
TRAITS	–	
BEHAVIOUR	Mindless	

CREEPERS AND MASSES

TYPE	HITS	REGENERATION
Creeper/Tendril	6	0
Secondary Mass	30	1D per hour
Main Mass	100	3D per hour

REFEREE'S NOTES

The adventure is very freeform and the Travellers may lack direction. This can be provided by the rescued scientists and crewmembers who will suggest ideas or argue with one another about what to do next. Rather than a simple chain of checks to complete each segment of the adventure, the Referee should play for tension and create a 'horror movie' feeling. The survivors also provide roleplaying opportunities.

The adventure comes to a close when the Travellers board their ship and leave Alpha with or without survivors. If they have visited all the locations detailed in the adventure and attempted to understand the nature of the creature, they may have gained knowledge that could be used against future infestation. They may also have been changed in other ways.

There is little in the way of financial payoff for the adventure and no significant loot to be had. The Travellers will be paid for their work and may receive a bonus for discoveries made or deeds done. However, the reward for success in *Deepnight Legacy* is not money – it is the chance to take part in the *Deepnight Revelation* mission. How well the Travellers do in this adventure will determine what advantages, if any, they have on their voyage to Terminus Point.

THE COUNTERAGENT

Knowing that something in Alpha's ecosystem is inimical to the entity's life processes is likely to be invaluable to the authorities. If the Travellers discovered it, their inclusion in the *Deepnight Revelation* mission will be extremely desirable. If the Travellers do not at least figure out that a counteragent could be created, it will not be available to the *Deepnight Revelation* mission.

INFECTION

If a Traveller was infected and cured or a counteragent was applied to them, the Referee should ask if they were fully cured. This is a decision the Traveller must make for themselves as it will have implications later. A Traveller not completely cured will need doses of the counteragent to keep the infection in check but will sometimes gain insights that others miss. Choosing to remain infected is a risk and will have consequences for the Traveller during the voyage, so this is not a decision that they should make lightly.

THE CARVINGS

When each Traveller first views the carvings, the Referee should ask what they make of them and place two dice in front of the Traveller as if expecting a momentous check of some kind. If the Traveller rolls the dice, the Referee should nod sagely and say something cryptic. If the Traveller indicates they understand the carvings *without touching the dice* the Referee should again say something meaningless and cryptic but note that the Traveller is 'sensitive' to telepathic triggers of this sort.

A different test could be used, or an actual check using the dice if the Referee prefers, or the Referee can explain that being sensitive has serious implications for TravellerS during the *Deepnight Revelation* mission and ask if any of the Travellers want to take the risk. Only one of them will be sensitive; the odds are too small for there to be multiple sensitives in the same place. If more than one Traveller wants to be sensitive the Referee should ask them to roll 2D and award the status to the highest roll.

If a Traveller does indicate they are sensitive, they will feel no effects at first but begin to have disturbing dreams the first time they sleep. Anyone familiar with the story of Eleanor Braam should rightly be concerned – she went mad and died as a result of her sensitivity to the carvings. The Traveller will soon be on the brink of insanity but it will be an insightful, revelatory madness...

E P I L O G U E

DEEPNIGHT REVELATION

Assuming the Travellers do not meet a horrible end on Alpha, their actions quickly attract notice. They will be contacted by a delegation of the Deepnight Corporation and the Imperial authorities, who want to know everything about the entity encountered at Alpha. The Travellers are made very aware that the story should not be spread; measures are underway to deal with the threat and a panic serves no useful purpose.

The Travellers are informed that an expedition is forming to seek out the ultimate source of infestation on Alpha and destroy it. Their insight would be very useful. Indeed, those with significant skills or experience will more or less have their pick of jobs aboard *Deepnight Revelation*, the starship being sent to investigate the entity's source location. It is outfitting at Giikur Naval Base and awaiting the last of its personnel

Further discussion reveals that this is a long-duration exploration mission, potentially requiring a 10 year voyage to reach Terminus Point and the same back again. Whilst the intention is to find out as much as possible about the Deepnight Entity – and destroy it if at all possible – there will be a major exploration component to the mission. Other survivors of the incident at Candling Station are being offered a place on the expedition but it is the Travellers who are most desirable. They have experience of long-range deep-space operations and have confronted an entity – and destroyed it, using only the scant resources available.

Which is why the decision has been made to offer them command of *Deepnight Revelation*.

Travellers who want command positions will have them, with advisors to cover any skill gaps. Those who do not want that responsibility will form a Special Advisory Group or take mission-critical jobs lower in the command structure. If they accept, the Travellers will take command of a 75,000 ton converted warship with a crew of 500 intrepid adventurers. They will voyage far beyond Charted Space and see things no human has ever seen before, journeying to Terminus Point and confront the Deepnight Entity in its lair. They may well decide the fate of all living things in the galaxy.

The greatest adventure in human history is laid before the Travellers. If they accept the offer, their exploits on DK-B1 Alpha will merely be the prelude to an epic voyage of discovery aboard *Deepnight Revelation*.

RIFT HAULERS 4A4 AND 5A7

The *Rift Hauler* is a long-range utility and supply vessel built to serve remote outposts and operate across rifts. It was never built in large quantities but the lack of many competitors has kept it in production on a low-volume basis. Many remote world governments have one or two of these vessels but by far the main operators are the Imperial Navy and Scout Service. Additional examples are made available by subcontracting to specialist trans-rift shipping companies such as the blandly named GRT Corporation.

GRT originally stood for 'Great Rift Transportation' but today is simply a designation. The firm was set up decades ago on a remit from the Imperial authorities and still employs a large number of ex-scouts and navy personnel. GRT retains close links with Imperial officialdom and enjoys a high level of security clearance enabling its vessels to service installations whose existence is not suspected by the general public. It is not uncommon for serving naval and scout personnel to be seconded to GRT for a time if there are manpower shortages, although this is not a prestigious or popular assignment.

GRT operates numerous Rift Haulers including *4A4* and *5A7*. Most are entirely standard, often with years of loyal, if unremarkable, service behind them. Nobody likes taking a newly built ship into the Great Rift; proven veterans are greatly preferred and may actually command a higher sale price than when they came out of the yards.

The *Rift Hauler* uses an unconventional layout. The cargo section of the ship is shaped like a broad rectangle, with the primary hold forward. This has a capacity of 339 tons and is accessed by way of doors at the sides and front of the hold. The secondary hold is configured to carry either 255 tons of cargo or 255 tons of fuel – contents cannot be mixed. It has large side doors for loading when not in use as a fuel tank. Access to the crew area is by a lift located in the centre of the vessel, with corridors running out to airlocks on each side of the ship. The sides of this corridor are the main transverse bulkheads, making the elevator shaft one of the most secure areas of the vessel.

The habitable part of the upper deck is narrower than the cargo/fuel area, with the main fuel tanks on each side of it. The bridge slightly overhangs the front of the lower cargo deck and from its rear access hatch a corridor runs all the way aft to the drive rooms. Crew staterooms are located off the sides of this corridor, with a common area around the central lift shaft. The emergency low berth chambers are off the sides of the corridor, after which it enters the engineering rooms. All areas routinely used by the crew are on a single 'shotgun hall' type corridor whilst airlocks are located on a corridor one deck down running at right angles.

Performance is modest, although the vessel's 2g acceleration does allow it to transit quickly to and from jump points. Jump-3 capability is sufficient for most operations and a *Rift Hauler* can make two consecutive 3-parsec jumps at the price of reduced cargo capacity. The deep space manoeuvring system allows 0.7g manoeuvres away from a gravity well, permitting deep space refuelling operations. The UNREP system can be used to receive fuel or resupply other vessels.

The *Rift Hauler* does not have enough power to run all its systems at once but since the jump drive cannot be used whilst conducting UNREP operations this is not a drawback. Nominal crew is six, with four engineers and technicians running the ship's systems and a bridge crew of two. Conventionally, the astrogator is most likely to be the ship's commanding officer but in practice command is assigned to the crewmember with the most experience. Crews tend to see considerable personnel turnover due to the nature of trans-rift operations. It is rare for anyone to serve aboard the same vessel for more than a few months, although there are always exceptions, so crew structure tends to be fluid and generally informal.

RIFT HAULER TRANSPORT

4A4 & 5A7

TL15		TONS	COST (MCr)
Hull	1,000 tons, Standard	—	50
M-Drive	Thrust 2 (Energy Efficient x3), Deep Space Manoeuvring System	20 10	60 36
J-Drive	Jump 3 (Reduced Fuel x3)	80	168.75
Power Plant	Fusion (TL15), Power 560	28	56
Fuel Tanks	Jump 3, 20 weeks of operation	269	—
Bridge	Standard Bridge	20	5
Computer	Computer/10/bis	—	0.24
Sensors	Improved	3	4.3
Weapons	None Fitted	—	—
Systems	Fuel Processor (100 tons/day)	5	0.25
	Fuel Scoops	—	1
	UNREP System (200 tons/hour)	10	5
	Configurable Cargo/Fuel (capacity 255 tons)	267.75	1.33875
Staterooms	Standard x6	24	3
	Emergency Low Berths x4	4	4
Software	Library	—	—
	Manoeuvre/0	—	—
	Jump Control/3	—	0.3
Common Areas		12	1.2
Cargo		339	—

TOTAL: MCr 396.37875

CREW

CAPTAIN/ASTROGATOR, PILOT, ENGINEERS X 4

RUNNING COSTS

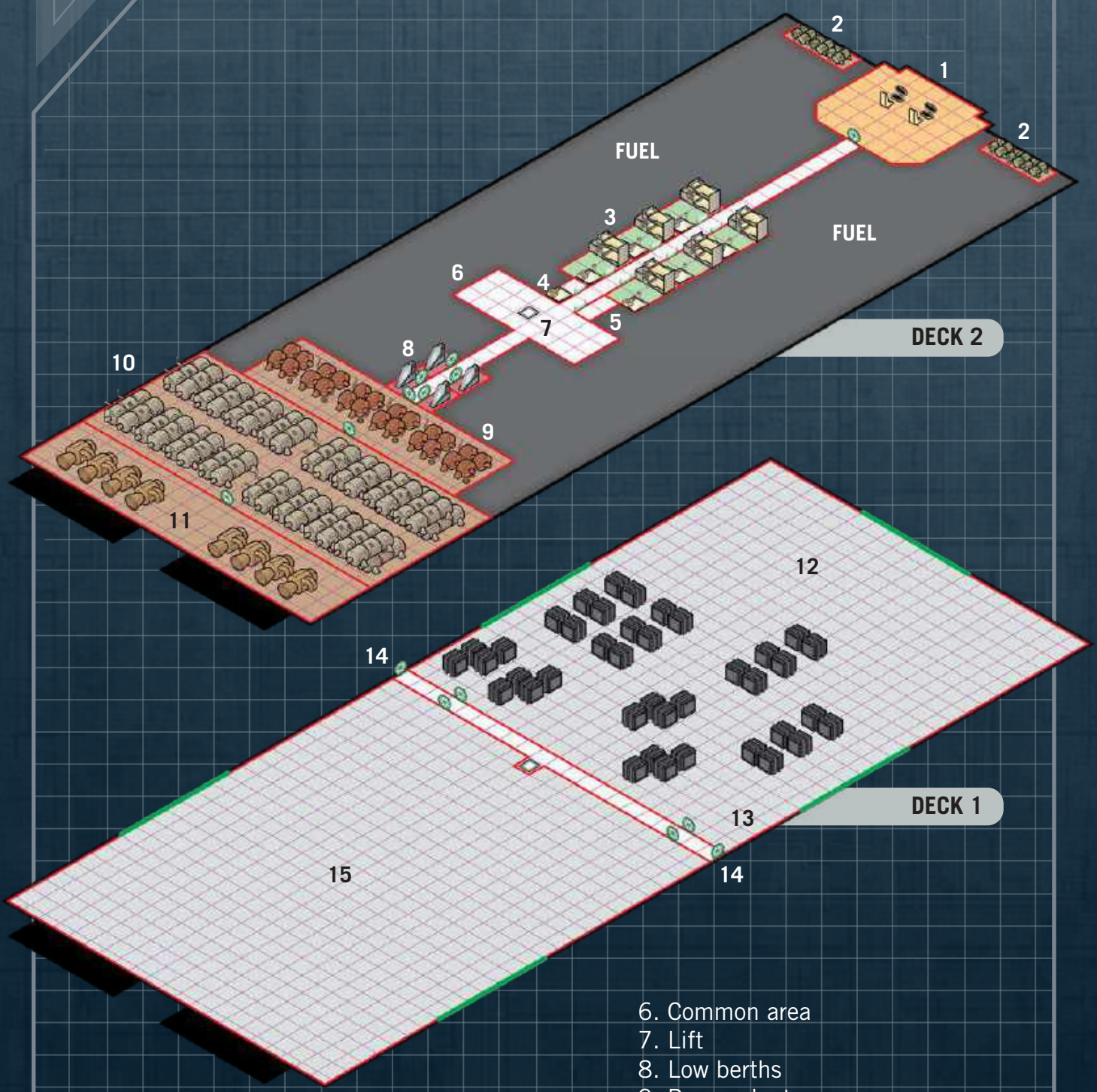
MAINTENANCE COST
Cr33031.5/month

PURCHASE COST
MCr396.37875

POWER REQUIREMENTS

50 MANOEUVRE DRIVE	200 BASIC SHIP SYSTEMS
300 JUMP DRIVE	4 SENSORS
0 WEAPONS	5 FUEL PROCESSOR

400
HULL POINTS



LEGEND

1. Bridge
2. Fuel processor
3. Staterooms
4. Fresher
5. Ship's locker
6. Common area
7. Lift
8. Low berths
9. Power plant
10. Jump drive
11. Manoeuvre drive
12. Main cargo hold
13. UNREP system
14. Air lock
15. Configurable cargo/fuel

L I B R A R Y D A T A

ABLE SPACEHAND K.V. MICAALU FINAL LOG

The log is crisp and business-like, although the tremor in her voice betrays fear. Everything else has been deleted, other than a quick note asking to be remembered fondly by her family.

Candling Station has fallen. We've been overrun by something alien.

I think it came in on the supply ship; some sort of infection that turned the astrogator into a monster. She was sick with what looked like a virus. It didn't respond to treatment but it didn't seem to get any worse for quite a while. Then… day 20 after the supply ship landed… she went crazy and started attacking people. She changed quickly after that; so did the ones she wounded. It was less than 24 hours later when they started attacking the rest of us. The astrogator was turning into something else by then. There was fungus growing on her face.

We weren't sure who was infected and who was not. The skipper broke out the security guns and we fought back. We blew holes in them but they kept coming, usually. Some didn't and I wonder if we killed our friends thinking they were hostiles. We tried to hold the command station but Spacehand Carey had been infected. He shot the skipper in the back… I shot Carey as he turned to look at me. I don't know if he was going to shoot me or not… it was like he didn't want to do it but couldn't help himself.

I went out the back window as one of the shamblers started smashing into the control room. I got to the ground okay but couldn't see what was going on. Part of the base was on fire and one of the ATVs was gone. So was one of the air/rafts. I saw Zurich getting into the other one with Dr Mil. They called me but I didn't know if they were infected so I made for my quarters. Got inside with three shells in the shotgun and two magazines for my sidearm.

Some of the hostiles were shambling fungus-zombies by this point. Some seemed to be normal but weirdly clumsy. They were all still recognisable as people I knew. They tried to get in but couldn't open the door. After a while they went away and I made a recce of the base. I tried to take a couple of them out but bullets didn't seem to harm the shamblers. I did put old Dr Salder down with a couple of rounds to the chest. He was clearly infected. He was trying to use a handgun; kept looking at it like he couldn't understand why it didn't work even though it was obvious there was no magazine in it. He went down when I shot him and four hours later he got up again as one of those things. I went back out and gave it a whole magazine but… no effect.

I've made a couple of ventures outside these past few days but every time I attract a shambler and have to take refuge. They smash at the door longer each time before they give up. I've seen them dragging stuff from other buildings; mostly food, even the potted plants. I saw one trying to eat the moss outside the science building. It gave up quickly, with the most human expression of disgust.

Final SITREP. I have no way of knowing if anyone else survived but I suppose it's possible. I think someone got away in the ATV. Both air/rafts are gone. Someone might have got to the observatory… one of the scientists was up there when this started I think. I made a try for the remaining ATV but they were onto me straight away. They chased me back inside and have been smashing at the door ever since. Now I'm trapped and out of food. If they get me I'll turn into one of them; one more soldier for the other side. Well, I can deny them that.

This is Able Spacehand Kinya Vaalence Micaalu, probable sole… last… survivor of Candling Station. Let the record show that we were overrun but we did NOT surrender. And I can take one of them out for you. Give the rest of them hell.

– (Single Gunshot) –

CHARACTERS

The five survivors of the fall of Candling Station may become part of the *Deepnight Revelation* mission, assuming the Travellers find them and keep them alive through subsequent events.

Erich Vaalan, Commanding Officer, *Rift Hauler 5A7*

MALE, AGE 43

STR 5 DEX 8 END 5 INT 10 EDU 9 SOC 6
Skills: Engineer (life support) 1, Engineer (power) 2, Electronics (sensors) 1, Flyer 0, Gunner 0, Mechanic 1, Vacc Suit 2

Erich is a former Imperial Navy petty officer who served several terms in the engineering department of small ships and never really achieved the promotion or advancement he expected. He is a solid worker but prone to becoming distracted due to an overactive imagination. This has led to him being particularly susceptible to the mental effects of the carvings and he has taken to spending long hours just staring at them.

When the Travellers arrive Erich is dressed in the ragged remains of his shipboard working dress, looking every bit the bedraggled castaway. He is more than a little incoherent and might be mistaken for a shambler at first. His crew ID card (which will unlock *Hauler 5A7*) is somewhere in the camp among other discarded items. Erich has been subsisting on very short rations from the air/raft's emergency kit and some old meal packs left at the camp. More than anything else, a solid meal will help lure him back to sanity. However, getting him to eat will be difficult as he is convinced everyone on the planet is infected and trying to get him.

Erich has one of the installation's air/rafts, which is still in working order. He will be difficult to persuade to return to the main encampment but could be convinced to go to some other safe place, such as the observatory or weather station if he believes the Travellers when they say those places are clear. Once away from the carvings Erich will gradually recover, although he is deeply traumatised by the encounter with the entity.

Deepnight Revelation: If Erich survives this adventure he will readily join the *Deepnight Revelation* mission, probably as a member of the engineering contingent. Erich is 'sensitive' towards the carvings and will retain some fragments of insight into the nature of the entity and the mission ahead. This may be useful during the campaign but Erich is also deeply fearful of the entity and a bit paranoid about infection. This will manifest itself as an obsession with decontamination and biological monitoring as well as a desire to destroy all traces of an entity if encountered.

Tass Engren, Junior Engineer, *Rift Hauler 5A7*

FEMALE, AGE 27

STR 4 DEX 9 END 6 INT 7 EDU 7 SOC 5
Skills: Deception 0, Engineer (m-drive) 1, Gunner 0, Mechanic 1, Pilot 0, Streetwise 0, Vacc Suit 0

Equipment: Large Spanner (2D)

Tass spent her career in small free traders and similar ships, eventually hiring on aboard *5A7* for a single trip that became two… and then this one. She is a generalist crewmember but never really got along with the rest of the crew. *5A7* was just a job to her and she intended to move on when a berth became available elsewhere.

Tass used to like starships but has spent 60 days locked inside *Rift Hauler 5A7*, in near-darkness with some kind of monster outside. She has developed some long-term psychological problems and wants nothing other than to get off Alpha. If rescued, she will form an obsessive bond of gratitude towards whomever she thinks is most responsible but will push for escape to the point where she is willing to advocate abandoning others. She will readily join anyone who plans to take a ship and leave, talking up her engineering skills to convince them to go. It would take a great deal of persuasion to even get her to leave her ship, other than to get aboard a different one,and she will flee back to its apparent safety as soon as danger threatens.

Deepnight Revelation: It would be a very bad idea for Tass to join the crew of *Deepnight Revelation* as she has serious mental health issues but she will follow a rescuer aboard out of obsessive loyalty. Again, she will talk up her engineering skills and experience aboard a rift-spanning starship to get a berth unless dissuaded. Her psychological problems are guaranteed to become worse if confined aboard a starship, however big, for years on end. Travellers allowing Tass to go with them are making a rod for their own backs.

Petty Officer Second Class Amelia Zurich, Candling Station
FEMALE, AGE 34

STR 7 DEX 8 END 8 INT 8 EDU 5 SOC 7
Skills: Electronics 0, Flyer 0, Gun Combat (slug) 2, Gunner (screens) 1, Mechanic 1, Melee 0, Vacc Suit 2

Equipment: Shotgun (4D)

Amelia is, or intended to be, career navy. She was the de facto security chief at Candling Station and has taken its fall very hard. This is counterbalanced by an unlikely relationship with Dr Mil. The two are currently keeping one another from total collapse and will not agree to separate without very strong persuasion. Amelia is still in possession of her ID card and can unlock the main installation's logs. She is unable to run or engage in strenuous activity due to a badly healed fracture incurred when she crashed the air/raft at the observatory.

Deepnight Revelation: Amelia will want to go on the *Deepnight Revelation* mission if Dr Mil chooses to do so and will go to any lengths to be included on the crew. She will not go if he does not, unless he has been killed in which case she will embark upon a self-destructive mission to find and kill all traces of the entity.

Dr David Mil, Exobiologist, Candling Station
MALE, AGE 67

STR 4 DEX 6 END 5 INT 10 EDU 12 SOC 9
Skills: Admin 2, Art (write) 1, Diplomat 1, Drive 0, Electronics (computer) 2, Engineer (life support) 1, Investigate 1, Persuade 1, Science (biology) 3, Science (chemistry) 1, Science (genetics) 2

David has had a prestigious career but one dogged by controversy. Repeatedly asked to take part in projects he could not stomach and twice forced to demolish the work of colleagues who had taken short cuts, he became disaffected with the academic community and took a post studying bugs on a rock in deep space. He has been semi-contented on Alpha and since the fall of Candling Station has come as close to happy as he has been in years. He is well aware of the horrible death awaiting in the valley – or perhaps ascending the mountain – and of the food and power running short in the observatory but his relationship with Amelia is worth whatever comes next as far as he is concerned.

David studied the infection in its early stages and is more than likely the foremost expert on the entity's biological processes in Charted Space. He may be able to deduce that something in the local biosphere is resistant to the entity and, perhaps, isolate it if he can get access to a laboratory.

Deepnight Revelation: David will readily join the *Deepnight Revelation* mission. His family from previous relationships is distant, at best, and he has come to like being away from mainstream society. Whilst a little eccentric and very untidy, he is a solid researcher who would be a real asset to the mission. He is aware that the expected duration might be the rest of his life but he has nowhere else to be.

Dr Simnon Kiin, Space Scientist, Chandler Station
FEMALE, AGE 44

STR 6 DEX 8 END 5 INT 9 EDU 11 SOC 8
Skills: Admin 1, Advocate 1, Drive 0, Electronics (computer) 1, Electronics (sensors) 2, Engineer 0, Investigate 1, Science (astronomy) 4, Science (cosmology) 2, Science (planetology) 1

Dr Kiin has been on Alpha for most of her post-doctoral career. She likes the solitude up at the observatory and interacts little with the rest of the staff, although there is no animosity. She knows about the fall of Candling Station only from the accounts of Amelia and David, and does not know what to make of it all. She is worried about food and power running out and is wearying of the other two and what she sees as their lovey-dovey making-the-best-of-it attitude to their confinement atop the volcano. Simnon keeps prodding the others for a plan to fix the air/raft and get back to the base, not really believing just how bad things are down there. The fact that she continues to disappear into the observatory for 14 hours straight has not inspired Amelia or David to greater efforts on that score.

Dr Kiin has little knowledge that can assist against the entity but is adept at modifying sensor equipment and could assist with the creation of specialised detectors. She may also be able to figure out that the wreckage originally found by *Rift Hauler 5A7* was of Ancients origin. She had her suspicions when she first saw it but if it could be recovered from the science lab and decontaminated, Simnon would be able to provide a positive identification.

Deepnight Revelation: If Simnon is forced to leave her observatory at Alpha she really has no idea where to go. A mobile space science laboratory and observatory aboard an exploration ship would be an ideal solution to that particular quandary, so she will jump at the chance to join the crew. She has already pinpointed the location referred to by the carvings and can assist with plotting a route.

TRAVELLER
DEEPNIGHT LEGACY

MONGOOSE
PUBLISHING

STUDIO
PUBLISHING